

the person or persons who leaked her name to the press.

We know that at least one, and possibly more, executive branch officials violated their oaths to protect classified information and, in doing so, they squandered an important intelligence asset and may have jeopardized the lives of people with whom she has been in contact. American security was harmed.

Some have offered weak excuses for the disclosure, saying the person's identity was already known or her work was not really important. Those are outrageous excuses. More troubling still is the fact that this was leaked in the context of a political vendetta. According to published reports, the leaker was trying to discredit former ambassador Joe Wilson, who was disputing the administration's assertions that Saddam was trying to unleash weapons of mass destruction on the United States. Of course, we now know Wilson was right.

As President George Herbert Walker Bush stated in a speech to CIA employees a few years ago, "Those who leak the identity of intelligence operatives are the most insidious of traders." What does it say about the ethics and responsibilities of this body and the administration that attempts to find this person have been so anemic?

URGENT NEED TO STRENGTHEN SOCIAL SECURITY

(Mr. GINGREY asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. GINGREY. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to speak about the urgent need to strengthen Social Security.

It is often said the first step to recovery is admitting you have a problem. Well, we have a problem. We have a serious problems.

Analysts predict that Social Security will be bankrupt by 2042. That may seem a far way off but, in reality, it means Social Security will not be around when today's 20-year-olds retire.

Since the 1930s, we have seen medical advances, technological advances, transportation advances, but we have not seen Social Security advances. We have to make this program sustainable for current and future demographics. We cannot do that if we are stuck using a 1935 model.

Let me be clear. When we talk about reforming the system, we are talking about strengthening Social Security for future generations, not weakening today's retirees or near retirees, who will get every single benefit they have been promised. While Social Security will not change for today's seniors, we have to fix the system for tomorrow's seniors.

My colleagues on the other side of the aisle may be content to make Social Security a political issue, but I am not. Our children's future is too impor-

tant for political posturing. My concern is more about the next generation than the next election.

SOCIAL SECURITY AND AFRICAN AMERICANS

(Ms. LEE asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Ms. LEE. Mr. Speaker, the President's very cynical attempt to sell his Social Security privatization scheme to African Americans, quite frankly, is very painful. Thank goodness African Americans are not buying it.

President Bush said that his privatization plan would benefit African Americans because we have a shorter life expectancy. It is truly remarkable that the President would rather exploit African Americans' shorter life expectancy to sell his privatization plan than actually do something to help African Americans live longer.

If the President is truly concerned about African Americans, he should support legislation and funding to address the health disparities that contribute to shorter life expectancy. Sadly, this is just the sort of cynical, divisive move we have come to expect from an administration that is bent on cutting the guaranteed benefit of Social Security and entrusting our seniors' retirement security to Wall Street and a roll of the dice.

Mr. Speaker, Julian Bond, President of the NAACP, and the gentleman from Maryland (Mr. CUMMINGS) were correct to call the President on this earlier this week.

HONORING MARYLAND VETERAN OF THE YEAR ORVILLE HUGHES

(Mr. BARTLETT of Maryland asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. BARTLETT of Maryland. Mr. Speaker, we cannot live in the land of the free without thanking the brave veterans who secure our liberty. It is my privilege to honor Colonel Orville Hughes from Monkton, Maryland, selected Veteran of the Year by the Joint Veterans' Committee of Maryland.

Colonel Orville Hughes served our country for 27 years in the Army during World War II, Korea, and Vietnam. He was a POW in Germany, earned a Silver Star in Korea, and served as the military attache at the embassy in Vienna, Austria. He earned many other commendations, including the Legion of Merit and the Purple Heart.

After his retirement from the Army, Colonel Orville Hughes continued to serve our country through the DAV, VFW, Military Order of the Purple Heart, American ex-POWs, and the American Legion.

I hope that by honoring the contributions of Colonel Orville Hughes to the country we love, we will appreciate and be inspired by his great example of achievement and service to others.

DEFENDING THE CONSTITUTION AND THE JUDICIARY'S RIGHT TO MAKE DECISIONS

(Ms. JACKSON-LEE of Texas asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Ms. JACKSON-LEE of Texas. Mr. Speaker, it is interesting, as I listened to a colleague at the beginning of our messages to the House who seemingly wanted to shut the lights off in this place and extinguish the Constitution, which reflects that we are not only a republic but we are a democracy. Democrats have a right to disagree with Social Security policies, Medicaid, Medicare, and educational policies, because this is a democracy.

Proudly so, we represent half of the United States of America, and we will continue to fight for our issues. One of those issues has to be to support this Constitution, the belief that we are a country governed by laws.

The Constitution designates under article 3 that we have a separate, independent judiciary, one that should be safely secured. Therefore, when Members of the opposite side of the aisle begin to attack court systems simply because they do not agree, they have violated the constitutional provisions that we adhere to.

It is a shame that judges are cowering in the corners because Members have decided to speak ugly against their right to make a decision. When conferences are held in Washington, D.C., and ultraconservatives begin to attack the judiciary, it is time for this congressional body to stand up and defend the Constitution.

END THE TYRANNY OF APRIL 15 ANXIETY

(Mr. PENCE asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. PENCE. Mr. Speaker, my late father used to say, you only have to do two things in life: die and pay taxes. Just about 40 minutes ago, I did one of those things, and I will let my colleagues guess which one it was.

Like millions of Americans, before midnight tomorrow night, I managed to fill out all of the forms which, for me, as a man of no significant means, a public servant married to a schoolteacher, there were only forms that I had to file in three States and with one national government. The full total of the pages that I had to fill out and file neared to 100.

Mr. Speaker, the People's House is supposed to resonate with the hearts of the American people. As we approach this tax day and go through our usual spring ritual of arguments in Washington, D.C., I hope the Congress will resonate with the heart of the American people and seize upon the opportunity to simplify this tax system and end the tyranny of anxiety that reigns throughout the land every April 15.